

Neighborhood Matching Grant Program FAQ's

What is the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program?

The Neighborhood Matching Grant Program helps neighborhoods fund various beautification and improvement projects by providing a dollar-for-dollar matching grant reimbursement ranging from \$500 to \$5,000. The program is designed to cultivate the spirit of volunteerism to help neighborhood-based organizations learn the art of planning and community building through neighborhood projects.

Who can participate in the program?

Eligible organizations must meet the following criteria:

- A neighborhood-based organization
- Incorporated as a 501 (c) (3) or 501 (c) (4) non-profit organization through the State of Texas
- Represent a specific geographic area located within the Houston city limits
- Identify how the organization will fund and support the project in the future

Political organization and individuals are not eligible

What type of project can be funded?

The program helps pay for physical improvements or projects that are accessible and beneficial to the community. The program will **not** pay for ongoing operation or maintenance such as upkeep of landscaping or a community garden. Funds received **through** this program may not be used to lobby or participate in political campaigns and/or elections. **Completed projects or completed parts of a project are not eligible for reimbursement.**

Proposed projects must:

- Improve a neighborhood through a physical improvement
- Involve neighborhood residents, have long-standing benefits
- Have written permission from property owners and/or government agencies at the time of submittal

When can the project start? When must the project be completed?

The funded part of a project can be started **only** after a Purchase Order with the City of Houston has been issued to your organization. The project must be completed by **Monday, May 18, 2015.**

How does the match work?

The grant money represents a partnership between the City and an organization. The City will reimburse up to 50% (not to exceed \$5,000) of a project's total budget. The project must be

completed by the project deadline and must be paid in full by the organization in order to be eligible for reimbursement. Original receipts/invoices and cancelled checks/credit card receipts must be submitted after project completion in order to receive your matching grant reimbursement on expenses incurred. **Cash transactions or in-kind services (food, materials, volunteers or equipment) cannot be submitted for reimbursement.**

How will the project be selected?

The Department of Neighborhoods, Public Service Division, Matching Grant Committee will review all proposals for eligibility. Projects will be selected for funding based on: 1) benefits to the community and community support for the project; 2) overall content and organization of the proposal; and, 3) capacity of the applicant to implement the project; and 4) funding availability.

When can we apply?

[Application](#) submittals will be accepted beginning on **Monday, September 29, 2014.**

When is the deadline to submit an application?

The deadline to submit an [application](#) is **Friday, October 24, 2014, 5:00 p.m.**

How long do we have to complete a project?

The project must be completed by **Monday, May 18, 2015.**

How do we obtain a Purchase Order account with the City of Houston?

If your application is accepted you will be required to have a City vendor number in order to establish a purchase order for future payment. You must submit a **Supplier Registration Form** and an **IRS W-9** form to the Department of Neighborhoods, Public Service Division. Finance Department

Strategic Procurement Division Phone: 832.393.8718 Fax: 832.393.8758

Email: martha.ramirez@houstontx.gov

We've participated in the Neighborhood Matching Grant program before and already have a vendor number, do we need to reapply?

No, however please confirm that your vendor number is still active if it's been more than one year since you applied for one. Please visit Finance Department Strategic Procurement Division Phone: 832.393.8718 Fax: 832.393.8758

Email: martha.ramirez@houstontx.gov

What do we do if we are unable to raise enough funds for the entire project cost?

The organization should scale down the project to fit a budget they can meet (**\$1,000 minimum project cost**).

Who is an organization's legal signatory to a contract (Purchase Order)?

The sponsoring 501(c) (3) or 501 (c) (4) organization is the legal signatory to the contract.

Can the project period be extended beyond the deadline?

No. The project must be completed by **Monday, May 18, 2015**.

NOTE: The project must be completed by the project deadline and must be paid in full by the organization in order to be eligible for a matching grant reimbursement. Original receipts/invoices and cancelled checks/credit card receipts must be submitted after project completion in order to receive your matching grant reimbursement on expenses incurred. **Failure to comply will result in non-reimbursement for project cost.**

Can an organization count its association dues towards its fund raising requirement?

Yes. Any funds that the association has are eligible towards the match.

If a selected project fails after an award is made, what happens?

In the unlikely event of project failure, the organization will not receive a matching grant on expenses incurred.

Are projects less than \$1,000 eligible?

No, the minimum project amount is \$1,000. The minimum matching grant award amount is \$500 and the maximum matching amount is \$5,000.

My organization has a 501(c) (4) classification, can we still apply?

Yes, 501 (c) (4) organizations are now eligible for this program, excluding political action committees (PAC). You will be required to sign a statement on the application stating that your organization is not a PAC and that grant monies will be used for a project that will benefit the community.

Will donations of equipment be counted as part of the match?

No. In-kind donations (food, materials, volunteers or equipment) cannot be used to match the City's funds.

Can I apply for funding for a project that's already underway?

Yes, however, completed parts of the project are not eligible for a matching grant. Only new additions to the project are eligible for a matching grant.

Can a project qualify if only a part of it has a definite physical product?

Yes. Only apply for funding for the part of the project that will display physical results.

Is a project aimed at providing playground equipment eligible?

Yes, if the equipment is accessible to the entire neighborhood. The organization will need to obtain a letter of approval from the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure that the equipment meets Parks and Recreation Department standards. See the department's website for more information.

<http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/adoptedparks.html>

What types of materials are allowed in project construction?

The materials used must meet City of Houston standards and have adequate permits (if required) from the pertinent department. **Projects must take place on property that is in compliance with ALL city codes. (Documentation is required)**

What can we do if land ownership is unclear for a site?

The City requires that permission is provided for use of private or public land. This information is **required for eligibility**.

Where can I get information on esplanade projects?

The Parks and Recreation Department, through their *Adopt-An-Esplanade* program, can provide information on esplanade projects. A letter of approval is required from the department. See the department's website for more information.

<http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/adoptedparks.html>

Where can I get information on subdivision markers?

The Public Works & Engineering Department reviews applications for subdivision markers. See the department's website for more information.

<http://documents.publicworks.houstontx.gov/document-center/subdivision-marker-registration-form/index.html>

Inquiries should be made by email to standardreviewcommittee@cityofhouston.net or by mail to:

**Standards Review Committee
Office of the City Engineer
611 Walker, 19th Floor
Houston TX 77002**

Who do we contact for more information?

Conya Barreras
Conya.barreras@houstontx.gov
832-394-0654

How do we apply? How can I get a copy of the application?

To obtain an application contact Conya Barreras, log on to the Department of Neighborhoods website at <http://www.houstontx.gov/neighborhoods/matchinggrants.html>
or write to the following address:

**Neighborhood Matching Grant Program
City of Houston
Department of Neighborhoods, Public Service
7125 Ardmore
Houston, TX 77054**

Attn: Conya Barreras
<http://www.houstontx.gov/neighborhoods/matchinggrants.html>